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Meanwhile, Back at the Farm

by William Jolliff

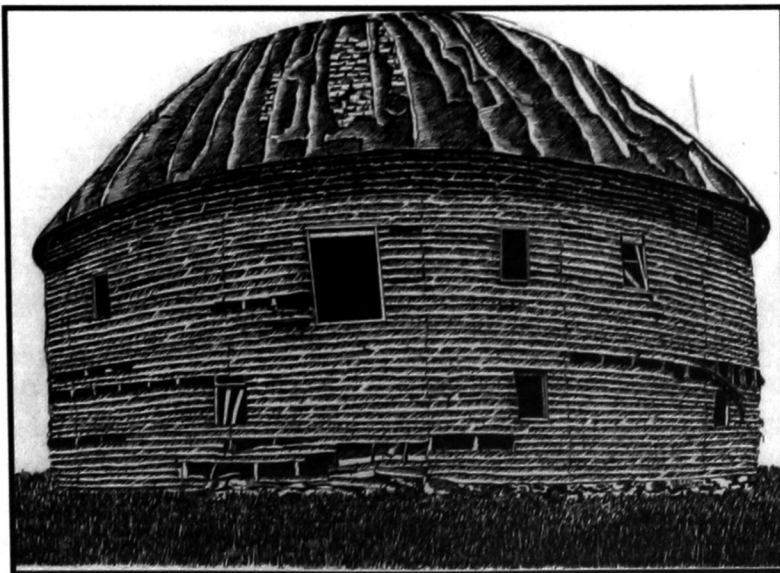
The sound and color of cornstalks,
two coyotes crossed the road this morning.
They paid no attention to my truck or rifle rack.
I suppose that makes them domestic.

When I was a boy here, you never saw a critter
larger than a ground hog. The smaller farms
were all sold by then, and the farmers
who stayed were quickly tearing out

every fence row and draining every wetland
as fast as you could run a dozer and spray
2,4,5 T . . . then lamenting, on the odd afternoon,
whatever happened to all the game?

Hell, huntin' ain't even worth the walk!
A farmer's child on a thousand acres,
I never saw a deer. But they've returned
to this uneasy Midwestern truce

and with them, the coyote. He shows
us how things come in twos: deer and coyote,
egg factories and flies, chemicals and corn ground,
ripe wheat and hard wind, anger and debt.



Drawing by Kristy Dewberry

